**SAFETY WITH ANIMALS**

**LESSON 4: Grades K-3**

**STRANGER DANGER WITH DOGS**

**Curriculum Connections, Standards addressed:**

**Academic Goals**: 1.5, 1.10, 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 4.3, 4.6 & 4.7

**Knowledge Goals**: Communication Arts: 1; Science: 3; Health & Phys Ed: 3, 4 & 5

**Objective:** To familiarize students with the appropriate actions to take if approached by an unfamiliar dog.

**Common Core-Aligned Activities:**

**SL.K-2-4—Describe people, places, things and relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly. (and)**

**SL.K-2.1—Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions.**

Encourage students to explore these following leads….Do animals have feelings? How do they express them? What happens when they become frightened? Do they understand the actions of people? How might they react? What can you do to make their world safer and more peaceful?

**Character Concepts:** Respect, Citizenship

**Respect:** How can your actions demonstrate consideration of the feelings of others…people and animals alike?

**Citizenshi**p: What can you do to make your community better? How can you protect the environment to keep it a safe place for all living creatures?

**STEM initiatives: Thinking critically in the connections to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math**

**2-LS4-1—Make observations of plants and animals to compare the diversity of life in different habitats.**

Encourage students to observe the behavior traits of animals, both domestic and wild. What behaviors are similar in different species? What are different? How can these traits compare to human behavior?

**Materials Needed:**

* Human puppet (can be a doll)
* Dog puppet (can be a stuffed animal)
* DOWNLOAD Handout: “If a Strange Dog Approaches…”

**Method:** Introduce this lesson by talking with students about unfamiliar animals they have encountered that frightened them. Due to fear, some children become prejudiced toward stray animals and want to harm them. To prevent this, explain that when an animal is frightened, he may bite to protect himself. This doesn’t mean the animal is bad or mean, just frightened. Stray animals are in trouble. Stray animals may be homeless, or could be lost, hurt, or sick. They need our help. Ask students to think about how it would feel to be lost or alone with no family or friends.

But, remember that even if an animal needs help, this is a job for an adult. The first rule to pay special attention to is:

NEVER GO NEAR A STRANGE ANIMAL. STAY AWAY. You wouldn’t approach a person you don’t know, and the same is true for animals.

If a dog comes up to you, follow these five steps to keep yourself safe:

1. Do not run. Freeze. Act like a tree. Stay very still and quiet, arms at your sides, feet together. Distribute the “If a Strange Dog Approaches…” handout to students. Demonstrate these actions then have the class practice.
2. Use friendly body language. How? Don’t scream. Dogs have sensitive hearing and this could excite or scare them. Don’t stare into the dog’s eyes. In dog language, staring is a challenge to fight. Don’t wave your arms around or try to hit the dog. Don’t kick at the dog. Stay calm and he probably will too. The dog may sniff you then leave when he realizes you don’t want to hurt him.
3. If the dog jumps on you or tries to bite anyway, use a jacket, backpack, basketball or anything you have as a shield. Let the dog bite the shield. Demonstrate this action then have the class practice.
4. If you fall or are knocked down, duck and cover like you would for a school tornado drill. Clasp your hands behind your neck, and pull your elbows in to cover your ears. Go down on your knees, then all the way to the ground with your legs tucked under your body. Your face, ears, neck and legs are protected. Stay down and “play dead” until the dog leaves, then get up and back slowly out of the area. Demonstrate this action then have the class practice.
5. If you are bitten or scratched, tell an adult. Describe what the dog looked like and in which direction he went. An adult can help the animal and keep others in your neighborhood safe.

**Call to Action:** Involve students in a role-play. One student will use a puppet and play the role of the dog, and another student will use a puppet to play the role of the human. Have the dog puppet approach the human puppet. Act out the safe things the human should do and the dog’s reactions.

**Reading:** Visit our section entitled ***Recommended Children’s Literature*** for a comprehensive listing of animal-related books.

**Web sites:**  Visit our section entitled ***Recommended Web Links*** for animal-related web sites.